Leys News

Delivered FREE to over 5000 homes across the Leys

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Leys News Limited

For details see notice on page 2

ISSUE 94 | APRIL 2012

LEAVING THE LEYS

AFTER eight years of supporting children and parents on the Leys, Jenny Martin is leaving her post as head of the Children's Centre and returning to Australia.

Jenny says that since she started working with families on the Leys, she has seen more parents come forward to support each other and get involved with volunteering at the centre, and this has improved their self confidence and feeling of being part of a community.

Jenny said: "The Leys is an amazing place to work and I have very mixed feelings about leaving. I have family back home in Australia and I want to spend time with them but it was a very hard decision to leave here. The Children's Centre has such an incredible team of people and I will really miss everyone."

Part of Jenny's role has been to support parents who are struggling to bring up their children. She added: "I have heard so many parents say that they think they are rubbish but usually they simply lack confidence. I have found that many parents who come along to the centre for our Stay and Play sessions often decide to join one of our courses, or become a volunteer here because they want to give something back. There is a lovely ethos here of seeing people grow and how they realise they can be helpful and make a real difference."

Jenny considers parenting to be one of the hardest jobs in the world. She said: "People have so much to give to each other and it's all about feeling part of a community. Parenting is the hardest job and under rated! Working with parents is crucial. With all the recent cuts we have been lucky to keep our funding and I leave the Children's Centre knowing that it is ready for the next important phase in its development."

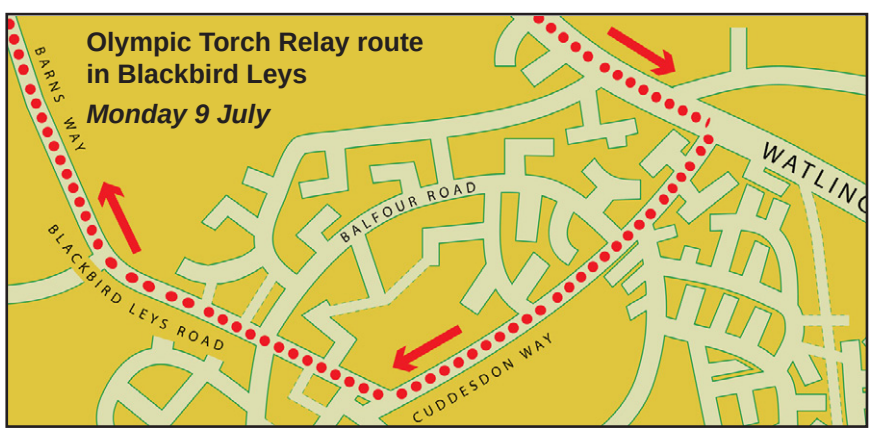
OLYMPICS COMES TO THE LEYS

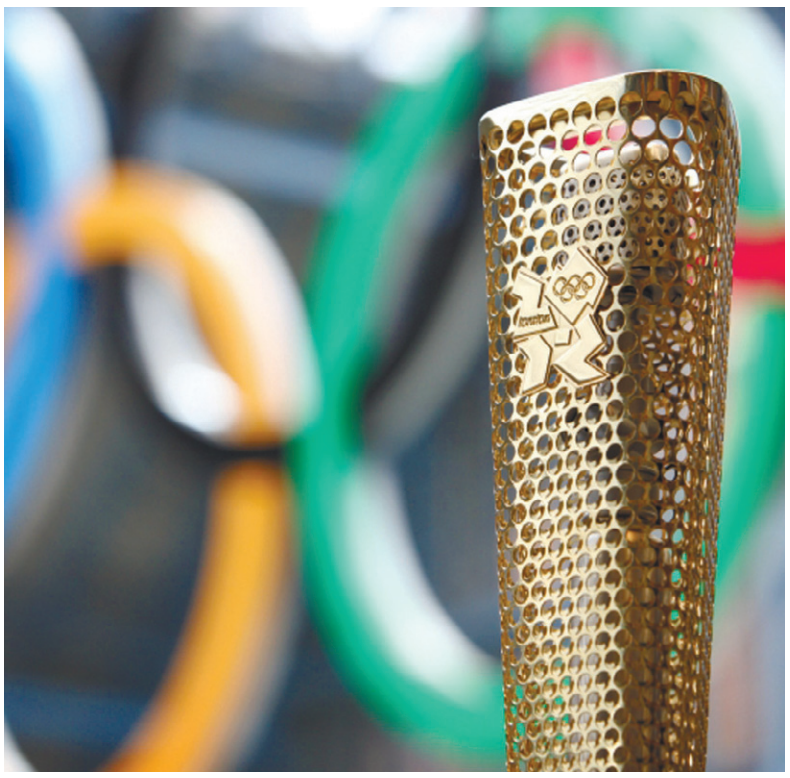
THE LONDON 2012 Olympic Torch will travel through Blackbird Leys on its way to the capital to mark the start of this year's games.

People in Blackbird Leys, Cowley Road, and St Clement's will be able to watch the Olympic Flame as it travels through Oxford, and celebrate the achievements of the inspirational Torchbearers who have been specially chosen to take part in the historic event.

The streets along the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay can be viewed in full at www.london2012.com/olympictorchrelay, which gives street-by-street details and proposed start times for when the Olympic Flame will travel through Oxford. Residents living in and around Oxford can find out when it will be travelling along their nearest high street or past their local shops. Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, said: "The Olympic Flame will be going through Blackbird Leys, the Cowley Road and St Clement's, before finishing at South Park for the evening celebration. It will mean that the residents and people from the surrounding communities will be able to witness the spectacle of the Olympic Torch Relay.

Continued on page 2





Getting ready for adventure!

BLAP re-opens soon. See page 3

Leys Dads are in the zone!

See what's happening at Dad's Zone on pages 7 and 8

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APRIL 2012

Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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Letter from the Editor

Hello!

Well as I sit in my office and write this letter, the sun is shining and the spring bulbs are bursting open to provide us with some welcome splashes of colour in our gardens.

Spring has well and truly sprung and the gardens, window boxes and pots around the Leys are all looking bright and cheerful, along with the blossoms on the trees – it's true that everything looks so much better when the sun is shining!

So let's hope that we are now in for a glorious spring and summer season. One group of people who will be hoping for some good growing weather are the keen gardeners on the Leys. Check out this month's gardening page for the latest updates on what is growing on in gardens and allotments and how you can get involved.

This month's paper is full, as ever, with a great collection of stories and particular mention needs to go to our community journalist Trio Watson who has put together a great feature about the Dad's Zone community group. I am always amazed at the number of groups that exist on the Leys and the amount of people who are supported by them. If you would like your community group featured in our pages then please get in touch and let us know.

And finally…we say a sad farewell to Jenny Martin this week who is moving back to her homeland of Australia to spend time with her family. Jenny has been involved with The Children's Centre for the last eight years having originally planned to stay in the UK for three years but in fact stayed for ten! The amazing work that Jenny has done to help families across the Leys will continue and although we will all miss her, we wish her the very best of luck for the future. We will be keeping Jenny up to date by making sure she receives an email copy of Leys News every month!

Have a great month
Best wishes
Sarah

BLOGGER NEEDED!
Are you a Leys resident and a keen blogger? Leys News is looking for a new member of our volunteer community journalism team to write a weekly blog about life on the Leys for our website.

If you are interested please email a 250 word blog entry about why you like living on the Leys to editor@leysnews.co.uk

You are cordially invited to attend the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Leys News Limited

Wednesday 30 May, 7.00pm
at the Leys News office
26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, OX4 7BX

Light refreshments will be available

RSVP to the Office Manager
on 01865 711756
or email officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

CALLING ALL SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN!

Would you like your sporting achievements featured in Leys News?

Email us at:
editor@leysnews.co.uk
or call 01865 711756

Snap your life on the Leys

A NEW project to encourage people to document living on the Leys has been launched by the Leys Neighbourhood Partnership.

The Our Place project is asking residents across the estate to photograph anything that makes them smile or scream. The photographs will be used as part of a community celebration day planned for May, and will be included in a booklet.

The project is being run in conjunction with Oxford City Council and Oxford City Council Heritage Asset Project, and cameras will be provided if you don't have your own.

The project is running in several locations across The Leys and anyone who would like to take can part can just turn up.

The dates are as follows:

4 April – Blackbird Leys Library, 11am–1pm

8 April – The Co-operative Childcare Centre, 11am–1pm

25 April – The Dovecote, 1pm–3pm

2 May – The Health Centre in Greater Leys, 1pm–3pm

9 May – The Leisure Centre, 5pm–7pm

For more information contact Cheryl Snudden on 07833 404411

ARE YOU HURTING THE ONE YOU LOVE?

IT is not easy to accept that your behaviour is hurting the one you love and your children but it is the first step in changing.

Oxford Safer Communities Partnership and Making Changes have come together to provide a community programme for men who want support and help to improve their relationship.

If you recognise that you are behaving in a way that is abusive to your partner, either verbally, emotionally or physically then this programme may be for you. It will be run in Oxford every Tuesday evening for 30 weeks.

The facilitators will help you to:

- Stop being abusive and violent
- Learn how to relate to your partner in a respectful and equal way
- Use non-abusive ways to deal with difficulties in your relationship and cope with your anger
- Take responsibility for your behaviour
- Understand the impact the abuse has on your partner and children

If you would like more information or to join the programme then please contact Making Changes on 07775 030523

Olympics comes to the Leys – continued from front page

…."I would encourage people to come out and line the streets and bring the route to life as well as welcoming the inspirational torchbearers into our community. This really is a once in a lifetime moment and I would encourage people to come out onto the streets or join us at South Park for the evening celebration."

Christine Carter, from Old Marston, will be one of the torchbearers in Oxford.

The 85-year-old was a volunteer at the Oxsrad Sport for All Centre which encourages disabled and able sports people to train together.

She has helped run car boot sales from the site as well as helping to run the café and lending a hand to set up fetes at the site.

Christine has also helped run the weekly Oxford Town Hall tea dances as well as making the teas. The tea dance raises funds for the Oxford Town Hall Old People's Christmas Parties, entertaining hundreds of pensioners, treating them to a Christmas Dinner, dancing and a free raffle with prizes donated by local businesses.

Christine says: "I am shocked that I have been selected to carry the torch in Oxford. I don't feel like I have done anything special to deserve it. I am sure once it sinks in I will be really excited about it.

"I am a bit nervous about being on the streets with everyone waving and watching me. I am not getting any younger so running with the torch will be a bit of a challenge."

The evening event includes The Tree of Light, one of four epic performances that will take place across the Thames Valley this summer. The culmination of a spectacular and ground breaking two year arts project, the performance will bring together 600 singers, dancers and power-generating cyclists from school and community groups across Oxfordshire. Staged around a central 'Tree of Light' – a monumental sculpted work created by cutting edge set design duo Block9 – the hour long performance promises to be a visual and sonic feast for the senses.

An average of 115 Torchbearers a day will carry the Olympic Flame during its 8,000 mile journey around the UK before it arrives at the Olympic Stadium on 27 July 2012 for the lighting of the cauldron at the Opening Ceremony, signifying the official start of the London 2012 Olympic Games. When the Flame arrives in Oxford, Oxford City Council will host an evening celebration at South Park and details of the run of show will be released over the next few months.

INCREASE IN CAR CRIME

THAMES Valley Police has reported that there has been a slight increase in theft from motor vehicles in the Leys.

PCSO Barry Sheehan said: "We would like to take this opportunity to remind all of our community to be mindful where they leave their vehicles, and what they leave inside them. Most importantly for them to make sure that any high value items such as Sat Navs, Ipods, bags, purses and so on, are not left out on display as this is likely to attract thieves to your vehicle. This also includes any wires that connect these items like charging leads and sat nav leads as they give the impression that there are such items within the vehicle."

Celebration plans gather speed

PLANS for a major community celebration on the Leys moved a step closer after 24 local groups pledged their support for the event.

On Saturday 19 May the doors will be open to everyone at the first Leys Housing Consortium Community Buildings Open Day Celebrations.

The Barn, the Clockhouse, the Dovecote and Kingfisher Green are opening their doors to everyone in the Community.

Ines Kretzschmar from the Leys Housing Consortium said: "It's a day not to be missed as there are activities, stalls, tombolas, performances and refreshments for everyone, young people, older people, families and singles. You will be spoilt for choice because 24 local groups and organisations are already extremely busy preparing the big event."

Among the activities planned for the day are fitness taster sessions with Skip Trix and Zumba for all generations a performance by Strawberry Fayre Majorettes, homemade cakes provided by the Clockhouse Project, plants, produce, second hand books, recycled homemade fabric and summer dresses and crafts for children. There will also be a mini market area with local produce organised by Leys Market, biscuit icing, face painting, football tricks, penalty shoot-outs, Sumo wrestling and much more.

Ines added: "The aim of the day is to have fun, show what is going on in the Leys Housing Consortium community buildings, showcase groups and activities, get more people involved and raise funds."

PICTURE: Some of the enthusiastic and hard working organisers of the event:

Graham Hooper – *Rosewood Club*
Sandy Briscoe – *Daybreak*
Katie Chester – *WCBN\Leys Community Market*
Richard Howlett – *Seeds for Change/Community Market*
Sally Meachim – *Leys CDI Clockhouse Project*
Jimmy Hayes – *Clockhouse IT Project*
Ines Kretzschmar – *Leys Housing Consortium*
Pat Scourfield – *SLIGO*
Reg Curnock – *SLIGO*
Mel Buckett – *Connection Floating Support*
Moe Scholl – *CAGLeys*
Patricia Wisdom – *Skiptrix*

OPEN FOR ADVENTURE!

ABOVE: Younger Volunteers during training.
RIGHT: Volunteers manoeuvre a new beam to make the bridge.

THE Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground will re-open on April 16, and volunteers have been trained to work for free as play helpers.

Those on the course complete their training by working at the adventure playground for a further ten hours. It means that the staff both paid or voluntary have all had to think about the challenges of an adventure playground and be trained in the basics of play.

The plan is first to open BLAP as an after school club on Monday April 16 at the beginning of the summer term under the leadership of Alston Quammie.

BLAP's after-school club will open on Monday through Fridays from 3.15pm to 5.30pm for £1 a session. Families with more than one child attending have reduced fees. Day long sessions will follow for four weeks of the summer holidays.

The aim is to provide lots of fun activities for 8–13 year olds in a safe and supervised environment. Other activities include gardening and opportunities to cook some of the produce, art and recycling projects, making music, den building and advice on bicycle maintenance.

The zip wire and tower bridge have been refurbished with help from the Thames Valley Probation Services work without pay offenders.

Contact Kieran Watson on 07773 848998

Local Neighbourhood Police Team

THE Neighbourhood Police Team for Blackbird and Greater Leys is always working to reduce crime and anti social behaviour in the area and consults with residents regularly to establish where they feel the Police and other partner agencies should focus their attention.

PCSO Barry Sheehan said: "In February there were a few reports that a group of boys were intimidating and threatening school pupils walking home from school on the Blackbird Leys Bridge. The offenders were soon identified after the team carried out static high visibility patrols on the bridge. The offenders have been given serious words of advice and this area is continually monitored and patrolled.

"In general for the last month ASB has been very low. The jobs that have been reported to us have been dealt with and there have been no further incidents in these areas. We are also paying attention to the tower blocks as there have been several reports of people congregating in the stairwells and intimidating residents within the block."

DRUGS

In February the team conducted a drug operation with a drugs dog and handler targeting four of the local pubs and local shop areas.

Although no arrests were made there were several positive drug stop searches completed resulting in fines issued.

PCSO Sheehan added: "We are actively targeting areas where drug dealing and drug misuse is known to take place. Areas such as the Windrush and Evenlode Towers and Blackbird Leys Bridge are being proactively patrolled by the team in order to reduce the amount of drug related activity. The team is aware of certain individuals who are involved in the drug activity within the estate.

"It is often mentioned that it looks as though we ignore these people and what they do on the street. We work very hard at collecting information about these people in order to rid the streets of them and their activities and get the best result for our community.

"We strongly urge that our community continues to report any information or concerns they may have in relation to drugs or if they suspect an individual, a group or a property to be involved in some form of drugs offences please contact the neighbourhood team on the below number or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."

HAVE YOUR SAY

March's Have Your Say meeting is on 30 March between 4pm and 5pm at Tesco's Ambassador Retail Park, Cowley and all residents are invited to go along and meet the team.

CONTACT

To contact the neighbourhood team call the police non emergency number 101 but if your call is an emergency then dial 999.

You can also contact the neighbourhood team via email: Leysneighbourhood@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk (*please note this email address cannot be used to contact Thames Valley Police to report crimes or for any urgent matters.*)

If you have information about crime or Anti Social Behaviour in your area but you do not want to speak to the police, please call the Crimestoppers charity on 0800 555111.

To view information on your neighbourhood team you can visit the force website at: www.thamesvalley.police.uk

You can now also follow your neighbourhood team on Twitter: http://twitter.com/tvp_bbleys

FABIA SNAPPED UP BY AGENCY

BLACKBIRD LEYS buxom burlesque dancer Fabia Cerra has been signed by Curvy Model Management in London, the first model agency to supply models exclusively who are size 16 plus.

Fabia was a semi-finalist in the 2009 Britain's Got Talent show where she showcased her talent as a buxom burlesque dancer. She also took part in Britain's Got More Talent 2011, alongside other favourite acts from the past four series of Mr Simon Cowell's hit TV show.

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YOUNG ARTIST WINS PRIZE

A NINE-YEAR-OLD pupil from the Mabel Prichard School in Blackbird Leys won a competition to design a logo for a new charity.

Mizan Rahman's winning design was for The Hawkwell Trust, a charity that provides educational support for children and families in south east Oxford.

Trustees and head teachers from The Hawkwell Trust charity gathered at a prize giving ceremony when local MP Andrew Smith presented Mizan with art equipment.

The charity trustees judged entries received from a number of school students and selected Mizan's creative piece as the winning logo. David Baron from The Oxford Academy said: "Mizan's logo really stood out amongst the crowd and gives a clear identity to the Trust."

Mizan said: "I love art. It was great having the opportunity to enter this competition and I'm really pleased I won."

The original artwork, now framed and presented to Mizan, will now adorn one of the walls in Mabel Prichard Upper School based on The Oxford Academy's site.

GET DANCING ON THE LEYS!

AN EXCITING new dance project to help the health and wellbeing of older people will launch in Blackbird Leys in April.

Oxford Options Resource and Wellbeing Centre and Oxford City Council secured a grant of £7,550 for dance activities for older people in Oxford, that will fund a year-long programme of activities for the over 50s, including opportunities to learn new skills, have fun, improve general health and wellbeing, as well as challenge stereotypes and perceptions of older generations.

The main part of the project will take place at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre and Oxford Options Resource and Wellbeing Centre on Horspath Driftway, Headington.

The sessions will be open to anyone 50 years of age and over, and will include developing a series of dance workshops that link movement and reminiscence, an opportunity to go and see performances with outings to local theatres, as well as a celebration event at the end of the project.

The project is designed to help older people keep active, reduce isolation and to celebrate ageing in a creative and innovative way.

Councillor Gill Sanders, who supports the Oxford 50+ Network, said: "It is great news that we have been successful in securing this funding. These sessions will help older people learn new skills, mix with new people and improve their general health. I hope that many people take this opportunity and get involved in these sessions."

The project will include regular dance classes at Oxford Options, a resource centre for older people, and an open Samba dance class for over 50s in Blackbird Leys.

The class will start at the Clockhouse in Blackbird Leys on Monday mornings from 10am to 11am from Monday 16 April. The sessions will cost £2.50 and are open to all abilities, no experience necessary.

The money will also fund training for dance artists and exercise instructors in developing dance activities for older people, as well as an Ambassador's scheme to engage older people in the running of the project.

The Oxford 50+ Network is an established group providing an opportunity for older people, and those interested in provision for older people, to get involved in their local community. They meet regularly, organising a programme of talks on a quarterly basis, offering a forum for older people to exchange information, raise concerns, discuss issues and find out more about services available to them.

If you would like further information about the sessions, contact Angela Conlan, Project Co-ordinator by email: angela.conlan@yahoo.com

Successful Prosecutions for littering

THREE people have been successfully prosecuted for dropping litter during the Cleaner, Greener campaign.

Maria Cooper, Pam Aird and Katherine Spiller were all convicted of dropping litter under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The Cleaner Greener campaign was launched in October 2009 to tackle litter throughout the city and to reduce the amount of cigarette butts, chewing gum and paper being dropped in the city centre.

The campaign has resulted in over 700 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) being served for littering offences in the city centre and 21 prosecutions.

Maria Cooper, of Cowley Road, Oxford, pleaded guilty and was fined £80 and ordered to pay costs of £50.

Pam Aird, of Thames Street, Abingdon, did not appear at court and was fined £100 and ordered to pay costs of £100.

Katherine Spiller, of Temple Street, East Oxford, pleaded guilty and due to her previous conviction was fined £150 and ordered to pay £100 costs.

NEW!
Afternoon Games Club
for OVER 50s

Do you enjoy DOMINOES? Or SCRABBLE?

Try our friendly club, for a game, a chat and a laugh! Beginners very welcome. We have lots of different games to play – choose what you like.

Monday afternoons
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tel: 01865 395908

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DON'T PASS THE BUCK

Your rubbish is your responsibility

If you pay someone to remove your rubbish, ensure:

- They're legal: ask to see their Waste Carrier's Licence
- You get a receipt
- You note the vehicle registration.

If your rubbish is illegally dumped, **YOU** could be prosecuted.

For more information, or to report fly-tipping, visit www.oxfordshirewaste.gov.uk contact your district council or email owp@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Oxfordshire **Waste Partnership** Your local councils working together to improve your environment

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www.oxford.gov.uk Oxford City Council

Oxfordshire County Council www.oxfordshire.gov.uk Working for you

South Oxfordshire District Council Listening Learning Leading

Vale of White Horse District Council

West Oxfordshire District Council

Leys Gardening

Gardening plans take root

PLANS for experienced Leys gardeners to share their know-how have taken root and started to blossom on Kestrel Crescent allotments.

Award-winning local grower Reg Curnock will be offering grow your own workshops for any budding gardeners who want to learn more. The next sessions will be on Saturday 14 April and Saturday 26 May, both from 10.30am –12.00pm.

Reg was approached by local training organisation, Seeds for Change, after they first promoted the idea back in February's Leys News.

Richard Howlett from Seeds for Change said: "For anyone who dreams of picking salad fresh from their garden this is the time of year to start making it happen. Whether you have a window-sill, garden or your own allotment Reg's workshops will help you learn the tricks for a bountiful harvest."

Reg added: "It's a great idea to get people growing their own food. It brings people together in a nice atmosphere and you save a lot of money."

The workshops are open to all from those totally new to gardening to the more experienced looking for advice and are free of charge. Everyone will also get to take home free seeds or plants to grow at home.

Grow your own workshops
Saturday 14 April and Saturday 26 May. 10.30am –12.00pm.

To attend any of the workshops call 01865 403134 or email richard@seedsforchange.org.uk.

Or just come along on the dates above to the allotment gate by the allotment hut on Kestrel Crescent, first right off Merlin Road from Blackbird Leys Road for a prompt 10.30am start.

GREEN FINGERS By Stuart Mabbutt

Wildlife on allotments

Picture: Jerzy Opioła.

WILDLIFE gardening, when growing food crops, encourages huge ranges of insects which in turn offer a natural control of the pests that infest our crops. Companion planting bases itself in the same theory.

Spreading compost increases soil based invertebrates (creatures without backbones) which hoover up vast quantities of pests.

Growing flowers with flat petals like daisies and chrysanths attract hover flies which eat aphids. Having a patch with dead wood and good ground cover gives beetles somewhere to inhabit which again feed on our pests.

Growing clover in the paths between the allotment plots will encourage bees that pollinate your crops.

Often we grow more on the allotment than we need, if you have a surplus why not leave them to go to seed and leave them all winter. This will give the birds a food source and insects somewhere to hibernate.

Weed only if you have to, this limits moisture loss when disturbing the ground, and encourages a natural ground flora that in turn attract insects.

The main thing is not to be too tidy when allotment gardening, let everything grow but allow nothing to dominate.

Happy Gardening

Stuart Mabbutt
Wildlife Gardening Specialist, 01865 747243

HOMES FOR WILD VISITORS

WOULD you like to attract some wildlife into your life? Wildlife gardening expert Stuart Mabbutt has some bird and bat boxes available to buy to encourage some new visitors to take up residency in your garden.

Stuart, who also writes the Greenfingers column in Leys News, said: "We have hand made them and they are better than the ones you buy in a shop. Our boxes last between 10 and 15 years, as proven in Shotover Country Park. We made some of the boxes there 20 years ago and many are still going strong.

"We have two styles of boxes, one with a hole on the front and other with hole on the side. These boxes can go on any wall or tree as long as it's not facing west and will attract a variety of tits.

"We also have a robin nesting box which has an open front, and these should be buried deep inside a bush or conifer as they like to be hidden. These shouldn't face west either. The bat boxes need to be sited south, south west or west."

The boxes are £17 each, and for more information email Stuart at shotoverhermit@hotmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A SCHEME to encourage more people to compost at home is appealing for volunteers to train as master composters.

The scheme is run by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, which representing the county's local authorities and Garden Organic, who provide the training and technical support. Oxfordshire is part of a nationwide Home Composting campaign, which offers subsidised compost bins to all householders in the county. The Master Composter programme runs alongside and strengthens this campaign.

Training is free, and covers the basic elements of home composting and related environmental issues. It takes place over two consecutive days, in Oxford city centre and the Garden Organic site at Ryton near Coventry.

Refreshments and transport to Ryton from Oxford city are provided. The training will take place on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 April, and attendance at both days is required.

For further information go to www.oxford.gov.uk

mail@leysnews.co.uk | phone: 01865 711756

DON'T DUMP IT!

PEOPLE across Oxfordshire are being warned that if they fly-tip their rubbish they risk prosecution.

Since 2007 the number of fly-tips in the county has dropped by over 3,400. Reduced levels of fly-tipping through increased enforcement action, use of CCTV and education campaigns has helped save local councils over £175,000 in clean up costs. However, fly-tipping still exists across Oxfordshire creating a hazard for wildlife and costing hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Paul Mocroft from The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership said: "Where fly-tipping is still a problem, the rubbish is often household rubbish that rogue traders have taken and then later dumped instead of disposing of properly.

"If someone else offers to take your rubbish away whether you pay them or not, you need to make sure you know where it's going and that the person taking it away has a licence to carry waste. If your rubbish ends up being fly-tipped you could end up being interviewed under caution and later prosecuted. If you take down a few basic details you could help with any potential fly-tipping investigation, and help to show you complied with the law."

Householders are advised to:
Ask to see their Waste Carrier's Licence which is issued by the Environment Agency, write down details of the waste they are taking, or even better take a photograph, take down the vehicle details including the registration number, and if you pay them, get a receipt and check that their details are on it.

You can log these details on the council's online form to show you complied with the law and help avoid prosecution at www.oxfordshirewaste.gov.uk

LEYS DADS ARE IN THE ZONE!

By Trio Watson

Conroy Harris and James Byard

DAD'S Zone is a lot of fun. Children squawk cheerfully in the sandpit, one dad nestles his son on his knee, there's some colouring in going on, and in the midst of the bustle, James is rustling up a fantastic breakfast of cereals, juice, scrambled egg and the full English breakfast that the centre provides at a modest price.

Then there's the experienced care staff, who are there for the dads as much as for the children, advice on work and finance, and above all, time in the company of other dads who have been in similar circumstances. It's a busy place but not overwhelming and there's a fantastic welcome once you can find your way through the childproof gate.

Being a dad isn't all fun and games, however. The centre is used by a variety of men. Single dads, lone parents, guys giving their partner a break, grandads with custody of their grandchildren, and dads who come to use the place for contact visits all agree that sharing time with other fathers is one of the things that makes Dad's Zone special.

"Sometimes you think the system's against you" said one parent, "and you need other dads to say 'Don't give up!'"

Another man agreed, "It can be a lonely place to be, being in the centre of custody rows with an ex-partner and having to arrange contact."

Conroy and Glen, who work at the centre, came in for special praise, "There's a real chemistry that works", said one. "They put a lot of the dads at their ease, which can be a difficult experience if dads have had conflict with their child's mother and then think they have to face a room full of women. It does exactly what it says on the tin – this is a Dad's Zone where they can engage with other fathers."

If you're a lone parent this can be me-time, as the staff keep a good eye on the kids too.I can't help but be interested in the smells coming from the kitchen, so I had a good chat with James Byard, the centre cook who's recently arrived on the staff team. "I noticed that Conroy and Glen were lacking in kitchen staff when I came here as a parent myself" he explains." It was a waste of their talents to be pulled away from caring duties to spend time stuck in the kitchen away from the kids. Conroy is a very experienced worker, and it's great for me too because that's what I have a passion for."

It looks as if, with the arrival of a new cook who's full of ideas, breakfasts aren't going to be the same. But he reassures me, "the full English breakfasts are going to stay. But we all seek to provide a well-balanced breakfast. We want to find things that are more appealing to fathers, and update the menu regularly. A job like this highlights the importance of good food and nutrition."

Portions are provided to feed adults and children, and an eye kept on portion size. None of the foods are fried, either, except for the fried eggs. The discipline in the arena of food extends to other areas of the centre, and Dads are looked after as well as being the carers for their children. A combination of care, play, imaginative provision and good company make the centre a place fathers trust.

So what about the playtime? The centre is engaging fathers with a clear structure of rest time and active playtime with their kids.

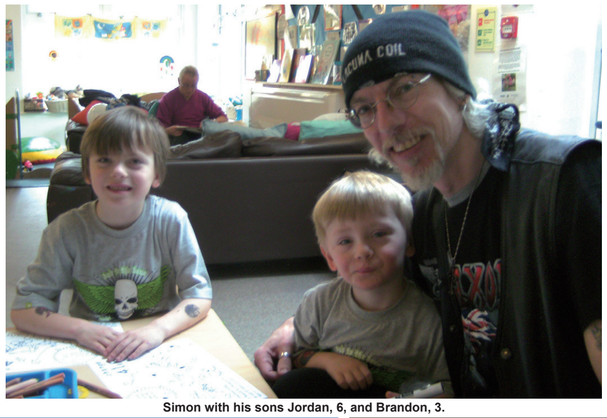
When breakfast is not on the table, there's an hour beforehand and an hour after for parents to openly play with their children, be it through water play, or the cooking corner (that has real food!) There's playdoh, outdoor games equipment, two sandpits, as the centre divides its play area into two sections to make sure the youngest children don't get trampled on, bikes, dressing up clothes...the list is endless. The children choose where to play, be it messy or imaginative or both. Not to mention the story books, and the singing corner with musical instruments, and the trip out for a lambing weekend? What a fabulous place to be a kid!

The playworkers are experienced with a wide range of children's needs – whatever's going on for you, you couldn't be in better hands.

As for meeting the dads themselves, who are at the heart of the project, I was very lucky to be able to talk to a few of them. "Support when it gets hard does help," said one. "My son likes coming here, and I get to see everybody and keep in touch. People who have left come back to say hello."

But it's more than just a social environment. These were sentiments that were echoed by other fathers. It's not a difficult place to be when your children are looking forward to it and you are too. And all the fathers enjoyed being parents. "My children have brought me a sense of completion" said one. "Having kids made me clean up my act" said another. "The kids make me feel younger!" "My boy's a laugh a minute. Having kids is the best thing I've done in my life." They all recommend the centre to fathers who haven't tried it, and some invite their friends along too. And as James said: "I've got unconditional love for my child. She made me realise how privileged I am to be a parent. Realising this opportunity only comes once, you've got no choice to have a lie-in or be single minded. My daughter comes first." With a twinkle he adds: "It's also an excuse to be a big kid," he smiles. "I like using my experience to show other dads that you don't have to be boring!"

Dad's Zone meets between 10.00 am and 1.30 pm each Saturday. For further details contact Conroy Harris, 0777 540 7524


Simon with his sons Jordan, 6, and Brandon, 3.

FROM REFUGEE TO SONGWRITER

Mark Samuels from Oxford's African School continues his series of interviews with inspiring young people.

FROM a child refugee in Albania to one of the most well-liked young men on the Blackbird Leys estate, Fio Osman's physical and musical sagas intertwine with one another.

He has grown up around music from Albanian to Jamaican and American, as well as UK music. Writing his first lyrics at the age of 12 to now, at the age of 15 a fledgling songwriter/producer he cites Sonorous, a local hip-hop luminary, as a formative influence. He learnt from and enjoyed the early tuition he received from him. This has been followed up by sessions with Adrian Prescott a popular DJ and radio personality, and this has led to him working towards an arts award outside of his studies at the Oxford Spires Academy.

Alongside his hip-hop he produces in dub and dub step and has been a guest on the local 0X4 radio station, as well as having a review of his featured in a recent literary exhibition.

This well-mannered, respectful young man deserves all the respect he receives. I join in with everyone who knows him in celebrating young Mr Osman and all his journeys.

The Oxford Jazz Festival returns

THE festival will take place from Sunday 1 April until Saturday 7 April with acclaimed jazz artists performing in some of Oxford's historic venues including the Ashmolean, the Oxford Playhouse and Saint Michael at the North Gate, the oldest building in Oxford. Cost: from £5 to £22 depending on event. Some events are free.

www.oxfordjazzfestival.com

Need help giving up smoking?

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FREE advice and support in Oxfordshire for smokers who want to quit 0845 40 80 300

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SMOKEFREE

Transitional Fashion

Fashion on the Leys with Natalie Wallace

FOR a brief moment I thought winter had finally hung up its woolly hat to make way for the warmer weather. It turns out I was prematurely optimistic. The high street stores are brimming with kaftans, bikinis and bingo-wing bearing strappy tops all of which are doing nothing but reminding me to lose the lard I've been hibernating in since Christmas. That being said, I'm fed up with feeling like a sloth dressing in chunky knit jumpers and/or 15 layers of clothing (which also do nothing for my lard- loaded thighs).

Fortunately, there is a way to dress for now and later. Pick a fabulously fresh looking dress as a foundation item and build your outfit around it, depending on what the weather decides to do that day. This way you won't be caught off guard when the skies decide to revert back to grey, cloud and fog from clear, blue and sunny.

A bold colour can instantly inject a summer vibe into your wardrobe as well as into your mood. This peplum style dress (*middle*) is the silhouette to be seen in. Until I'm feeling brave enough to get my pasty legs out, I'm personally opting for a maxi dress (*far left*). Don't be fooled into thinking that flowing maxis are just for the beach. Paired with a fine knit jumper over the top you can create your own separates. Both dresses featured this month are

£20 from Florence and Fred at Tesco. Candy colours are big news and a simple shift (*top right*) is versatile as the simple lines can be layered with pretty much anything you already have in your wardrobe and look fantastic with a few summer accessories when the time comes. This yellow shift is £18 from boohoo.com. Finally Primark does it again with a classic shirt dress, (*bottom left*) for only £10. I love the pink belt and trim detail.

Worth getting a pedi for I spied these gorgeous creations (*bottom right*) and simply had to share. The glossy printed fabric heel and platform would have you thinking these are more expensive than they are and cut out details are big news with the major labels of the shoe world. These lovelies are called Helix from ASOS.com. Priced at £65, they are still a bit steep. Maybe you deserve a treat?

SUN SHINES FOR SPORT RELIEF

By Trio Watson

Juliet and Mia, age 8, with England scarf

BLAP, Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, opened its doors to raise cash for Sport Relief last week. After months of fundraising and campaigning to re-open the facility, BLAP will officially open on 16 April (*see page 3*)**. Visitors to the Sport Relief event paid £1 and enjoyed sport, games, singing, refreshment, and music. Sharon, a work experience student who has been co-ordinating the event, said: It's great that everyone knows each other and the community works together. BLAP is a doorway into a spacious, nurturing and friendly play area for everybody."**

If you want to get involved or find out more, please contact Kieran Watson or Sue Price on 07773 848998 or email sueprice.blap@virginmedia.com

What's On at The Leys Children's Centre

APRIL – MAY 2012

61 – 63 Cuddesdon Way, Blackbird Leys OX4 6SB

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cuddesdon Corner **For Mikko Enticknap call 01865 773263** **(Linked with Orchard Meadow School 01865 778609)** **For Anne Wells and Valerie O'Malley call 01865 779615** **For Camille Kalaja call 0789 995 8316**	Maths* Starting16 April. 1.00 – 3.00 pm. Contact Anne Wells . Knitting Group* Starting 23 April + 1.30 – 3.00 pm. Contact Anne Wells. Stay & Play for Babies, dads, mums and carers 1.00 – 3.00 pm. Contact Mikko Enticknap. The Breastfeeding Café – for pregnant and feeding mums 1.00 – 2.00 pm. Contact Camille Kalaja. Legal Advice Direct 1.00 – 4.30 pm. Contact Valerie O'Malley to make an appointment. The Listening Centre 12.30 – 9.00 pm. Phone 01865 794794.	PEEP for 1s # 9.30 – 10.30 am. Call 01865 395145. Stay & Play with lunch (*small fee*) 11.00 am – 2.00 pm *including:* ● ***Speech and Language Advice*** available 12.00 – 1.00 pm. ● ***Nursery Nurse*** advice and information available on the second. Tuesday of the month, 11.00 am – 12.00 pm. ● ***Lone Parent Advisor*** advice and information available on the last Tuesday of the month, 12.00 – 2.00 pm. Job Centre Plus 1.00 – 2.00 pm. See Joumana at Cuddesdon Corner. The Listening Centre 5.00 – 9.00 pm.	**NEW!** Mentoring* Starting 18 April. 9.30 – 11.30 am. Contact Anne Wells. **NEW!** ESOL group* Starting 9 May. 9.30 – 11.30 am. Contact Anne Wells. Midwife Clinic for post natal and baby checks, support and advice. 12.30 – 2.00 pm. Drop-in or make an appointment on 01865 221696. New Baby Group For parents and children birth to 12 months. 1.00 – 2.30 pm. Contact Mikko Enticknap. The Listening Centre 5.00 – 9.00 pm.	**NEW!** Cooking on a Budget* Starting 3 May. 9.30 – 11.30 am. Contact Anne Wells. **NEW!** Aromatherapy* Starting 10 May. 9.30 – 11.30 am. Contact Anne Wells. Agnes Smith Advice Centre (for advice on benefits, money advice and debt) 10.00 am – 1.00 pm. Contact Jackie Knight 01865 770206. Also for details of other drop-in sessions. Asian Women's Group* Starting 19 April. 1.00 – 2.30 pm. Contact Anne Wells. **NEW!** ESOL conversation* Starting 3 May. 1.30 – 3.00 pm. Contact Anne Wells.	Stay & Play with lunch (small fee) 9.00 am – 2.45 pm. Dads Worker available. **Saturday** Dad's Zone 10.00 am – 1.30 pm. Contact Conroy Harris 0777 540 7524. **PARENT FORUM** Come and meet the new Head of Leys Children's Centre ***Thursday 19 April at Cuddesdon Corner 9.30 – 11.30 am Childcare available***
Orchard Meadow **01865 778609**		Parents Coffee Morning in the Parent Room, 9.00 – 10.00 am. Support our Sparklers* 10.15 – 11.30 am. Sessions run on 24 April, 8 May, 22 May. Contact Ruth Donaldson 01865 779615.	Baby PEEP 1.30 – 2.30 pm. Call 01865 395145.		
Pegasus **01865 777175** **Contact Rachel Walding**			Stay and Play 9.15 – 11.30 am. Stay and Play 12.45 – 3.00 pm.	**Saturday** Maluchy (***Little Ones***) **10.00 – 11.30 am, Pegasus School.** **Call Agata 07874 187 704**	
Windale **01865 777796** **Contact Karen Clarke**	Stay and Play 9.30 – 11.30 am.	Leys Childminder Drop-In 12.30 – 2.30 pm. Contact Maureen Sim, 07877 59 6321.	Together Time 12.30 – 2.30 pm. Contact Catherine Westbury-Cook 01865 779615.	PEEP for 1s 9.30 – 10.30 am. Call 01865 395145. Stay and Play 1.15 – 3.00 pm.	Parents Coffee Morning 9.00 – 11.00 am.
Leys Health Centre	Infant Feeding Talks For pregnant women 11.00 am – 12.00 pm. To book an appointment Contact Camille Kalaja on 01865 788688.	Baby Massage For babies from eight weeks old living on The Leys. 1.00 – 2.00 pm. Contact Linda Picton 01865 788688.		Baby PEEP 1.30 – 2.30 pm. Call 01865 395145.	
The Dovecote **Nightingale Avenue**	Baby PEEP 9.30 – 10.30 am. PEEP for 1s 1.30 – 2.30 pm. Call 01865 395145.	Sparklers Every other Tuesday, 17 April, 1 May, 15 May & 29 May. 1.15 – 2.15 pm. Contact Ruth Donaldson 01865 779615.	PEEP for 2s 9.30 – 10.30 am. Grandparent Drop-In 1.00 – 2.30 pm. Contact Valerie O'Malley 01865 779615.		

PEEP groups in the area contact 01865 395145
+ course runs every other week

Single sessions at Cuddesdon Corner

Thursday 26 April	9.15 am – 12.15 pm	First Aid in the Home
Monday 30 April	9.30 – 11.30 am	Domestic Abuse information and awareness session
Thursday 31 May	9.30 – 11.30 am	Behavioural Management for Young Children

Childcare is available for all single sessions. Contact Anne Wells to book places.

Co-operative Nursery

Provides childcare on the Leys, 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. For more information call 01865 401205.

Additional childcare information available on a separate leaflet. (For a copy contact Valerie O'Malley on 01865 779615)

EVERYONE WELCOME!

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www.theleyschildrenscentre.org

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register for our newsletter or join us on Facebook

Celebrate May Morning

ORGANISERS of Oxford's historic May Morning celebrations are hoping for a peaceful and safe event to mark the coming of spring.

Celebrations will start at 6am with the choristers of Magdalen College choir singing Hymnus Eucharisticus from the Great Tower. Hymnus Eucharisticus was composed in the 17th century by a Fellow of Magdalen and has been sung every year from the Great Tower on May Morning at this early hour as the sun comes up.

This year Magdalen Bridge will be open to pedestrians and closed to traffic from 4.30am until 9am to enable everyone to enjoy the singing in comfort and safety. The bridge will re-open to traffic as soon as it is safe to do so between 8.30am and 9am.

There will also be May Morning events and activities taking place across the city including Morris Men dancing in Radcliffe Square, Catte Street and Broad Street.

Many bars and restaurants across the city will open for breakfasts including eateries in the city centre, Jericho and East Oxford.

Rachel Capell, City Events and International Links Officer at Oxford City Council, said: "Once again we are opening up the city so everyone can take part in the event together, in a safe and enjoyable environment. Last year we held a successful event and our aim this year is to support and promote all the activities and events taking place across the city for the people of Oxford to enjoy together.

"For many years, Magdalen Bridge, has been a focus of attention and we want to celebrate the whole city and everything that is traditional about May Morning. May Morning has always been led by the people of Oxford and is about everyone joining in the fun.

"We also want to remind people that the river is once again very low and with the threat of a drought we expect the river to be even lower by May."

Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, said: "May Morning in Oxford is one of those very special local traditions that goes back many years and brings Town and Gown together for a few hours of fun – especially if the weather is kind!"

Photo: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CotswoldMorrisHandkerchiefs20040501_CopyrightKaihsuTai.jpg

Leys News SHORT STORY COMPETITION

THE creative writing juices of our readers are still flowing, and this month's short story will definitely stop you in your tracks! Once you have read this, take a look at the article on page 8 and see if you can spot the connection!

We welcome short stories from all our readers and will choose at least one each month to feature in our pages. Please email your entries to editor@leysnews.co.uk (*put short story in the subject line*)

A Trip to the Countryside

By Lathario Chase

One of the great things about living in Oxford is that you can jump in a car and within a few minutes you can be in the countryside. And if there was ever a time I needed to take advantage of that, it was today. I'd spent the last few days refitting our kitchen and had barely been out of the house all week. It was a beautiful Saturday morning as I headed out of the city in my transit van, up through Barton towards Stanton St John.

The city soon slipped into the distance behind and gave way to trees and fields and lush green countryside. I thought of the hustle and bustle of Oxford. The Cornmarket teaming with tourists, the shoppers jostling past them and the students cycling all over the place. I was glad to be away from all of that. Away from the noise, the busy-ness, the people.

I had driven through Stanton St John and had turned down the little roads at random, choosing at whim whichever seemed to be the quietest and least used. I no longer knew exactly where I was, but I didn't care. All that mattered was that I was far from civilisation.

After a while, I found myself on a road that was little more than a track really, and I pulled the van over just where a gap in the low hedge opened out into an empty field. I got out of the van, stood by the gate and took a deep breath of the fresh country air, admiring the view.

This was just what I needed – there was not a single person in sight. No cars, no buildings. It was so out of the way, it might be days or even weeks before another human being passed that spot. It was a wonderful thought.

It was so peaceful and so quiet. No people, no music, no mobile phones going off....Even that ever-present background noise of traffic was absent. You get used to in the city and don't really notice it, but when it's not there, it's really obvious. I stood there a while listening to the only sound there was - the song of birds in the trees that lined the fields.

I sighed deeply, content with the world and happy to have found this place.

"Its perfect," I thought as I opened up the back of the van. "Absolutely perfect. I couldn't hope for a better place to dump this bloody fridge."

CRAFT CORNER with Jane Yates

I THOUGHT I would do a grown up Crafty Corner this issue.

For some time now I have dreamed of owning an original Ingo Maurer paper chandelier, but the price of nearly £1000 is quite a bit out of my budget.

So I thought I would make my own version. Ingo Maurer's suspension lighting fixture is covered in love letters in lots of different languages which are individually attached to thin wires by clips. I'm moving home soon so hope that each visitor to my new house will write a short good luck note or draw a cartoon.

Light up your life!

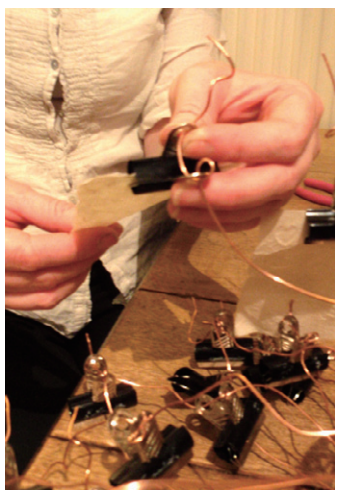
Things I needed:

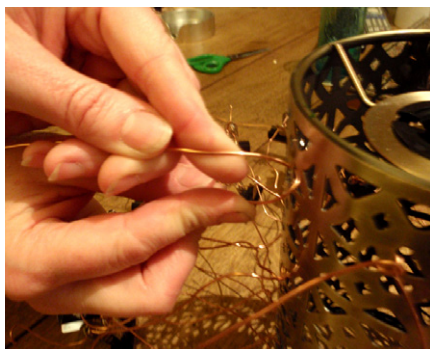
- Pliers with wire cutters in them (*see picture top right*).
- Roll of 2.50mm copper wire. £7.50 Maplins, Botley.
- Metal lamp shade. £6.50 Wilkinsons, Cowley
- 60 small bull dog clips. These were 20p each from Honest Stationery, Cowley Road
- Handmade paper. £2.75. Paperchase, 0xford city centre.

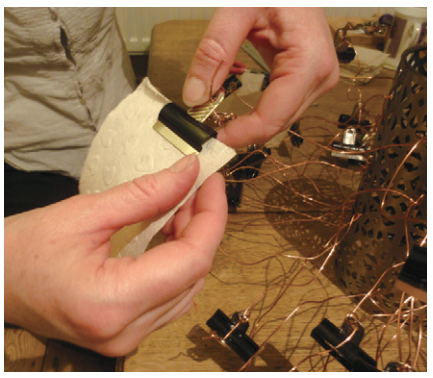
Total cost £28.25

Method:

- Measure the wire into 30 lengths of 24 inches.
- Take each piece of wire and thread it though the holes in the lamp shade at equally spaced intervals, so that there is about 12 inches sticking out from the shade then twist to hold in place (*see picture middle right*).
- Attach a bull dog clip on to each end; put them in different places along the wire to add to the effect. Bend the wire in places to give a more varied shape.
- Cut up the paper into small pieces about three inches by six inches, then clip on (*bottom right*).
- Only use a low watt bulb.



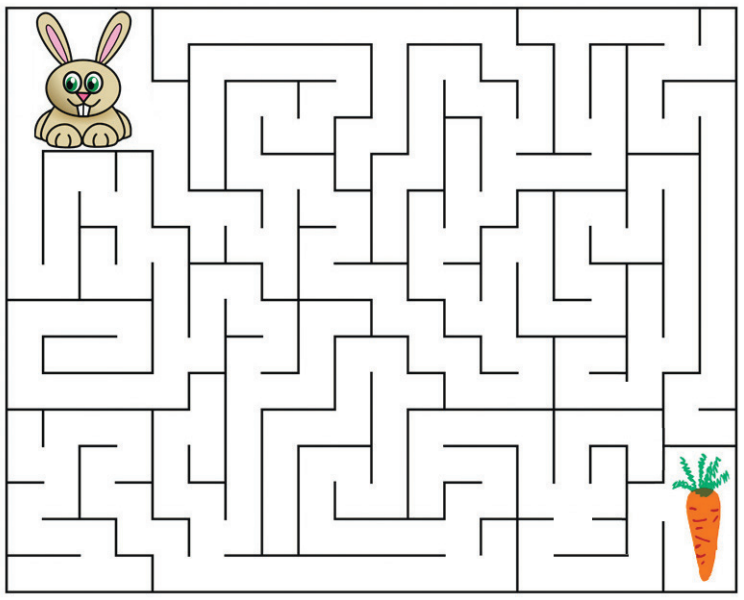




Kid's Easter Holiday Fun

Easter Bunny Colour-in

Help the Easter Bunny find his carrot!



Easter Wordsearch

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i	h	r	v	x	m	f	d	c	h	l	l	n	r	u
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q	o	e	r	b	b	a	o	u	n	p	w	y	d	c
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w	j	j	t	j	e	l	l	y	b	e	a	n	b	a

Basket
Bonnet
Bunny
Daffodils
Easter
Eggs
Flowers
Gumdrop
Hopping
Hunt
Jellybean
Lilly
Parade
Rabbit
Spring
Sunday
Tulips

Easter Jokes!

What do you call a sleeping egg?
Eggs-hausted!

Who is the Easter Bunny's favourite movie actor?
Rabbit De Niro!

What did one egg say to the other?
Heard any good yolks lately?

What do you call a dumb bunny?
A hare brain.

Why couldn't the egg family watch T.V.?
Because their cable was scrambled.

What do you get when you cross a bunny with a spider?
A harenet.

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a good joke?
It might crack up!

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THE GUILD OF MASTER CRAFTSMEN

Gallery at the Old Fire Station

Here and Now
Call for submissions
4 – 18 May

The Exhibition

As part of Artweeks across Oxfordshire, Arts at the Old Fire Station will present an exhibition of photography by the people of Oxford, focusing on the city in which they live.

Run in conjunction with The Caravan Gallery, O3 Gallery, Oxford Castle Quarter, Crisis Skylight, Grandpont Children's Centre and The Redbridge Travellers Women's Group, the exhibition, entitled Here & Now will take the form of a free competition and is open to anyone living in Oxford to submit their photos for selection. Our intention is to create a snapshot of the reality of living in our wonderful city that might be at odds with the romanticised idea that the world has of Oxford.

Call for submissions

Do you want to be involved? Well you can be! A selection of images will be turned into museum quality print to be displayed in the Here and Now exhibition in the Gallery at the Old Fire Station during Artweeks. One prize winner and two runners up will receive a selection of goodies including a signed copy of Is Britain Great? 3 by The Caravan Gallery and a set of postcards commissioned for the Pride of Place Project at Oxford Castle. All exhibitors will be able to collect their print after the exhibition has closed.

So grab your cameras and get snapping! We can't wait to receive your interesting insights and unusual observations.

Download the competition rules from www.oldfirestation.info/gallery.html

Changing Directions
At the ArkT Centre

ArkT Centre

A friendly and stimulating five week course for any adult who wants or needs to make changes in their lives. Perhaps you are facing redundancy or have retired, or had serious loss. Perhaps you just feel stuck in a rut. Join our friendly group and start exploring new ideas, interests, creativity and volunteering. All ages welcome.

Starting date: **Thursday 26 April**
Venue: **Ark-T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley** (*near the multi-storey car park*)
Times: **10.30–1.00pm**
Cost: **£2 per session; FREE if you are on benefits**

For more details of this and any other courses contact:
katherineihughes@yahoo.co.uk 01865 776643
nstevenson@oxford.gov.uk 01865 252118

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page. If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please call Sobia Afridi on 01865 484886

Leys Learning

Community journalism comes to Cowley

Volunteers from Cowley who are taking part in the course, along with Project Director Henrietta Gill.

THE success of community newspapers continues to spread across Oxford City, and a group of volunteers from Cowley are now being trained as Community Journalists.

With the financial support of Oxford Brookes University, and Leys News, a five week training course is now under way at the Ark T Centre to give volunteers the basic skills needed to create their own regular newspaper.

The training course is being led by Leys News Editor Sarah Edwards. She said: "We have an exceptional group of people at Cowley who are all keen to learn more about local, community journalism. We are almost half way through the course and the first issue of the paper will be out in May so we have a lot of work to do!"

RUSKIN COLLEGE OPEN FOR VISITORS!

RUSKIN College in Walton Street is holding an open day next month for all adults who would like to be given a second chance in education, and to see first-hand how straightforward it is to gain new qualifications.

Ruskin offers courses ranging from basic numeracy and literacy up to post-graduate qualifications. It is strongly recommended that anyone interested in applying for a Higher Education course, attends an Open Day to discover more and make a fully informed decision about which course is right for their needs.

Academic Registrar, Hannah Jones said: "At a Ruskin College Open Day you will get to find out about the courses we offer, how to apply, available funding, meet tutors and meet with students - who will tell you what it is really like to study with us - and get all your questions answered."

Ruskin prides itself on having small tutorial groups and a high staff-to-student ratio with plenty of one-to-one support time, all of which results in exceptionally high levels of student satisfaction.

Ruskin College believes in giving adults a second chance in education and the desire to learn and succeed is the most important entry requirement. The College welcomes students who not only want to develop themselves but also want to put something back into society.

Ruskin offers courses in: Activism and Campaigning; English Studies: Creative Writing and Critical Practice; Writing for Performance; History; Law; Youth and Community Work; Social Sciences; Women's Studies; Social Work; and International Labour and Trade Union Studies.

For more information about the courses on offer or for full details of all of Ruskin's forthcoming Open Days please call Hannah Jones, Academic Registrar on 01865 759604 or send an email to: hjones@ruskin.ac.uk.

The next Open Day takes place on Friday 27 April. See www.ruskin.ac.uk for timings and further information or ring 01865 759600.

Oxford Brookes graduates support Academy students

OXFORD Academy's Year 7 and 8 students have been busy working alongside students at Oxford Brookes University who are studying for an MA in creative writing. The project is being funded by The Student Community Fund and work will be collated at the end into a booklet showcasing the student's work.

Students have worked individually and in groups to write a series of stories and poems based on the theme chocolate is the word. The work created so far has shown some great imagination and creativity and students will perform their stories at The Oxford Literary Festival on 30 March.

News from BLITZ

IT courses still FREE with Blitz!

Would you like to improve your IT skills?
Would you like to improve your work prospects?
Would you like help to get a Job?

BLITZ blackbird leys information technology zone

Enrol NOW for our April courses...

● BEGINNERS
Informal twelve week courses for adults with little or no computer knowledge.

● COMPUTER MAINTENANCE
Understanding your computer in the home and work environment. First line support, hardware, software, file management, trouble shooting, upgrades. (*You will require some basic IT skills to access this course.*)

● BRIDGE TO A QUALIFICATION
(*Full level 2 ITQ Certificate*) Excel, Powerpoint, charts and graphs, more advanced Word and File management. (*you will require some basic IT skills to access this course.*)

● CV WRITING, UPDATING YOUR CV AND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES
Monday mornings (*by appointment.*)

● SILVER SURFERS: You are never too old!
We offer free beginner computer lessons for our older community.

DROP IN TIMES:
(FREE access to the internet for all adults)
Monday 12.30 – 3.00 pm
Tuesday 12.30 – 3.00 pm
Friday 12.30 – 3.00 pm

Do you want to help your community?
BLITZ is currently looking for voluntary teaching assistants with basic IT skills

For more information call 01865 714492

Blackbird Leys IT Hub
Leys Linx Centre, Blackbird Leys Community Centre

ruskincollege
learning to make a difference

Want to study for a Law degree at Oxford Brookes University, but you don't have A'levels or relevant work experience?

Come and find out how at Stoke House, Ruskin College on Friday 20th April 2012

During the day you will:
- Find out about the opportunities to study Law
  - Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) in Law at Ruskin (doing this means you don't need to do A'levels)
  - Law Degree at Oxford Brookes
- Find out about the CertHE entry requirements and the application process for applying to Ruskin, then Oxford Brookes
- Get information on course content of the CertHE Law at Ruskin and Oxford Brookes Law courses
- Get information on additional short courses
- Get information on the financial support that is available
- Get a taste of what it is like to study Law at Ruskin, and then Oxford Brookes

The day will start at 11am and finish at approximately 4pm.

You will need to book a place if you would like to attend.
To do so please contact Hannah at:
E: hjones@ruskin.ac.uk
T: 01865 759604

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

www.ruskin.ac.uk www.brookes.ac.uk

Your local representatives

Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper;
Vice Chair: Brian Lester;
Non-position holders: Tanya Prescott, Chris Hatton, Cyril Martin, Mrs Ann Booker, Mrs Sheila Smith, Pat Stannard, Rae Humberstone (*see City Council section below*), Gerry Webb

For further details telephone 01865 716943 during office hours of 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Send mail to Parish Council, 13 Bailey Road, Oxford, OX4 3HU.

Also check leysonline.net to find out about Parish Council Meetings.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward

Val Smith – *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
valsmith@gmail.com
or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk
(*her city councillor entry)*

Rae Humberstone – *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys
☎ 01865 779678
cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uks

Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week. They can also visit people in their homes – ring or email to make arrangements.

Northfield Brook Ward

Stuart Craft – *Independent Working Class Association*
5 Emperor Gardens, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7WB.
☎ 07733 274324.

Scott Seamons – *Labour*
2 Orchard Court Rose Hill
Oxford OX4 4HJ
☎ 07910 595047
cllrsseamons@oxford.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division

Val Smith – *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Richard Stevens – *Labour*
Flat 6 Eaton Court, Water Eaton Road, Oxford OX2 7QT
☎ 07725 353031
richard.stevens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament for Oxford East

Andrew Smith – *Labour*
Unit A
Bishops Mews
Transport Way
Oxford OX4 6HD
☎ 01865 595790
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

PET HATES

BY ALAN WITTON

A voice from nowhere?

EVERY time I go into the Cowley shopping centre (which is often) I am greeted by a disembodied voice saying "Welcome to Templars Square! We hope you enjoy your stay." It is almost guaranteed to ensure that I don't enjoy my stay. In any case I seldom intend to stay long in that soulless place. Whizz through perhaps do a few odds and ends of shopping, and if I see a familiar face I might sit down and perhaps even share a cup of tea with them; that's my usual programme. Anyway, if the management are so keen to welcome me to their shopping centre, why can't they follow the Japanese custom and have a couple of staff members bowing and smiling to everyone who comes in? Really....

Disembodied voices are big business nowadays. If you travel on a London bus you will often hear repeated an impersonal litany like "Next stop is Harley Street. This is a service 30 bus to Hammersmith." This was probably designed mainly as a help for the blind – as the equivalent message, flashed up on an electronic screen at each stop, was presumably designed as a help for the deaf! I'm sympathetic to both blind and deaf people, of course, but I wish there was some better way of getting the message to them. They did trial a similar system briefly in Oxford, but it lasted only a few weeks. Apparently the problem of ensuring that the stop being announced was the same as the stop the bus was approaching, defeated the electronic whizz-kids of those days.

What gets me about all these disembodied voices is precisely that they are disembodied - that there is no visible human agency. Sometimes the announcement, assembled as it must be from numerous bits and pieces, does not even sound as if it could have been spoken by a human being. The intonation goes up when it should go down, or vice versa. "This is a First Great Western train" (pause to change tapes) "to Paddington".

HUMAN TOUCH

Now there are occasions when these impersonal announcements can be useful, or even necessary. Nobody wants to see another fire like the one at Kings Cross underground station, which claimed 32 lives. So I for one am reassured when I hear a recorded announcement that "for the benefit of all our customers, smoking is not permitted on the Underground". Although I was even more reassured when I once heard a very human voice saying "Will the gentleman in the red anorak and beige woollen hat on Platform 2 please put his fag out; smoking is not permitted." It showed someone was attending to the CCTV screens, anyway; and sometimes the human touch is unbeatable!

I don't know how many of these voice recordings are inflicted on the public of Great Britain every day - perhaps millions. I don't know exactly how many people are out of work in Great Britain at present, but the last time I looked it was about three million. Now how about sitting all those unemployed people down at a microphone (or even three million microphones) and letting them take over all those disembodied voices? We might even hear more of a human touch now and again - something on the lines of "will the two children playing tag at the end of Platform 1 please stop? You will get electrocuted and run over by a train, and we don't think your mothers will appreciate getting you back as bits of fried bacon!" Well, I never promised I was any good at writing scripts for all those disembodied voices.

THE TETCHY TEEN

THIS month our Tetchy Teen Ross Arrowsmith **shares his shopping stress and decides that for lazy teenagers . . . online shopping is definitely the best option!**

OVER the past few years, many people like me have become lazy when it comes to shopping and so shop online instead. I mean, blokes don't do shopping anyway, unless it's for some kind of technology or game, generally most of us pretend that "yes, there is plenty of growth room in the shoe" or "yes I do like the colour coordination of this shirt with these jeans".

And so Amazon, the massive online store has been a saviour to us people, and has also been very helpful at Christmas time and at birthdays.

A couple of weeks ago I was shopping for a new phone, as I thought that I was fairly behind on the latest phone technology, I thought I'd up my game a bit and get an android phone.

My first stop was O2 of course, followed closely by Tesco Mobile, the latter of which I chose. Three-five day delivery, said the website.

Three days passed. Four days passed. Five days passed. One week passed. Two weeks passed.

Surprised at how much my patience had held out, I asked my mum and we decided to chase it up with Tesco.

And so my mum, bless her, sat on the phone and was transferred through four different people to find out my order had actually been cancelled.

That is simply because we forgot to click on the microscopic "accept" button, and so the order was not completed. What a hassle.

Which brings me of course to the question, is internet shopping really more efficient than going into a shop?

The answer is yes, of course! Anything that doesn't require getting up out of the chair or walking round a high street usually is a thumbs up thing for me.

I mean, even if you do walk into town to get something, the person you are with, (my mum, for the sake of this anecdote) always persists in drifting towards New Look or Superdrug.

There are pros and cons to both, but I suppose it depends on what you're buying. Personally I'd just stick with the quick nip to the shop to grab a bag of Doritos. It keeps me fit!

CLASSIFIEDS

Reach new customers in your local area with a Leys News Classified ad. Advertise your business from as little as £10 per issue (when booking for 12 months). To book your space ring John on 01865 711756

BUSINESS SERVICES

Does your business need a boost?

We offer a cost effective writing service for small businesses, and provide copywriting, press releases, web content and newsletters.
mediabird@btinternet.com
☎ 07966 523662

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www.hawtin-electrical.co.uk
☎ 07811 401279

Calvin Pennant
71 Long Lane, Oxford OX4 3TN
☎ 07960 328170

CLEANING

Solo Assist Domestic Cleaning Services (including end of tenancy). ☎ Marilyn on 01865 308067 or 07990 630332

CARERS

Acquire Care
Oxford Science Park, OX4 4GP
Tel: 01865 338050

COMPUTERS

Friendly Computer Support

Broadband and wireless setup, speed up your computer and health checks, anti-virus support, Microsoft Windows re-installation and upgrades, data backup solutions.
One-to-one private tutorials: Microsoft Office, emails, computer maintenance and file management.
☎ 01865 469069
& 07884 318 464
efaria@gmx.co.uk

FAST/TAKEAWAY FOOD

Chillies Indian Cuisine
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EX
☎ 01865 775849

Dominos Pizza
57 Between Towns Rd, OX4 3LR
☎ 01865 777137

Papa John's Pizza
80 Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4HS
☎ 01865 402050

Pizza Hut
3 Courtlands Rd, Rose Hill, OX4 4HS
☎ 01865 236116

Pizza Polo
34 Cowley Rd, Littlemore OX4 4LD
☎ 01865 425630

FLORISTS

Joe Austin
174 Cowley Road, OX4 6NQ
☎ 01865 792037

The Garden
99-100 The Market, OX1 3YD
☎ 01865 240709

GARDENER

Female Gardener
Weeding, watering, planting, and trimming at reasonable rates.
☎ 07788933891

GARDEN CENTRES

Acorn Nursery
Stadhamptom, Oxford
☎ 01865 891663

Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR
☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF
☎ 01865 714111

Wyvale Garden Centre
Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford
☎ 01865 326066

JOBS

Start your own business with Neals Yard Remedies. For more info call Katie 395960
kches2001@yahoo.com

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HAIRDRESSERS

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☎ Jenny, 01865 776777
& 07501 787 123

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25 Eastern Ave, OX4 4QS
☎ 01865 597064

Safe Heating & Plumbing
37 Druce Way, OX4 6TJ
☎ 01865 772303

TAXIS

ABC
70A Hollow Way, OX4 2NH
☎ 01865 597029

Air Link Oxford
24 Vicarage Close, OX4 2NH
☎ 01865 434040

Oxford Cars
Regus, 7200 The Quorum, OX4 21Z ☎ 01865 406070

WINDOW CLEANERS

MRF
37 Green Hill, OX4 7UD
☎ 01865 599812

Taylors Windows
Greater Leys
☎ 01865 773486

What's on in the Leys

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756.

ADVICE

Agnes Smith Advice Centre
Gives free independent and impartial advice.
Drop-in sessions are in the centre on Mondays 2.00–4.00pm and Fridays 10.00am–12.00pm.
Also in the Farmhouse on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

CHILDREN

Teenage Rounders Class
Tuesdays, 4.00–5.00pm
£1.20.
For 14–18 year olds
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Breastfeeding Café
Mondays, 1.00pm – 2.00pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Camille, 0789 995 8316

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities & advice for young people. ☎ 01865 772886.

Brownies: Thursdays, Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass 07886 757338.

Dovecote Afterschool Club
Mondays – Thursdays, 3.15pm – 5.00pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299

Maluchy group for Polish speaking families with children ages 0 to 5 years. Saturday, 10.00am – 11.30am, at Pegasus School.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

35th Oxford Scout Group
☎ Duncan Bowler, 0776 6293353
duncan@35thoxford.com

Strawbery Fayre Majorettes
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 7.00–9.15pm.
Taking on new members any time of the year.
☎ Eleen Filer 01865 717781

Leys Kiddie Club
Mon, Tue, Thur and Fri, 9.30am–2.30pm, at Dovecote Family Drop-in Room. £1.

Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30p at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

Mother and Toddler Bounce
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

Rainbows
For girls aged 5 to 7.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Laura Turner, 07787 528120

EDUCATION

Able Centre
Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 728688

Blitz IT Courses
IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance and more.
☎ 01865 714492

Blackbird Leys Library
Cuddesdon Way, Opposite Top Shops.

Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying, reading group, holiday activities.

Opening times
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed

LEISURE

Grow your own
Free sessions to learn how to grow food in your garden, on an allotment or on a window-sill.

Take home FREE seeds.

Sat 14 April, 10.30–12.00pm

Sat 26 May, 10.30–12.00pm

At Kestrel Crescent allotments
☎ 01865 403134
richard@seedsforchange.org.uk

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool
Blackbird Leys Road.

General swimming times are
Mon & Fri 5.45–6.45pm.
Sat & Sun 11.15am–1.00pm, and 1.30–2.30pm

Prime Time for over 50s:
Mon, 12–1.00pm;
Wed 11.30–12.30pm

Water Workout:
Tue and Fri, 12–1.00pm

Slimming World
Thurs, 12–1.00pm

☎ 01865 467040

Irish dancing. Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

Boxing Club.
Tues and Thurs 7.30–9.00pm, at Youth Centre, Blackbird Leys Road.
☎ Tony Gibson, 432995.

BBL Leisure Centre

- Zumba,
Mondays, 10.30–11.30am
- Body Balance,
Tuesdays, 11.00–12.00pm
- Legs, Bums, Tums,
Wednesdays, 10.15–11.15am
- Body Pump,
Thursdays, 9.30–10.30am
- Pilates,
Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am
- Boxercise,
Fridays, 10.30–11.30am
- Overs 50s indoor cycling
Mondays, 11.30–12.15pm

☎ 01865 467020

OLDER PEOPLE

Samba Dance for the over 50s
The Clockhouse
Starts 16 April.
Mondays, 10–11am. £2.50.
Dance to infectious rhythms, shake it up and let it all out!
No experience necessary.
☎ Claire Thompson, 01865 252820
cthompson@oxford.gov.uk

The Clockhouse
see box right

Prime Time Over 50s group, Wednesdays, 10.30am - 3.30pm, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road (£1.50). Keep fit, bingo, indoor bowls, speakers, activities and trips. ☎ 07534 740589

Golden Circle
☎ Bernard Tucker, 460592

Silver Circle
☎ 435954 (Blackbird Leys Community Centre)

Monday lunch club
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

Leys Community Church Over 60s Club
Wednesday afternoons.
☎ Keith Templar, 715815

Grandparents' Stay & Play
Bring your grandchildren to the Leys Childrens Centre drop-in, specially for grandparents.
Weds 1–3 pm at the Dovecote.

WELLBEING

Skiptrix Fitness Class
Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4.00 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

Slimming World
Thursdays, 5.15pm and 7.00pm, Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road.
☎ Gill, 01865 730009

The Listening Centre
A counselling service for Blackbird Leys and Oxford. Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

Survivors
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre. 9.30am – 3.30pm.
All welcome.

A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support for, to share experiences and to press for greater awareness of the needs of survivors.

Lunch available for £1. Pudding 50p. Breakfast from 50p. Card making. Table top sales.
☎ 07729 581975

Men's Group
Join us for regular end of day in a relaxed and friendly environment. Learn stress management tools and use this space to talk with other men and organise activities together.

Wednesdays, 5.30–8.00pm
Cowley Wellbeing Centre
26 Between Towns Road

☎ Duncan / Lanre
07435 760 809
01865 749998

Yoga For All
Experienced Yoga teacher, starting a new class.
Please call Linda Highland on 01865 432570

NETWORKING

Women's Community Business Network
Open to all women who have a business or are interested in finding out more about starting one.
Speaker plus networking.
Meets second Tuesday of each month 7.30–9pm at the Jack Argent room, Leys Community Centre. £3
☎ Katie, 01865 395960
womenscommunitybusiness@yahoo.co.uk
www.womens-business-network.co.uk

Leys WI
Meets at the Clockhouse on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm.
☎ To find out more call Rachel Fisher on 07528 433199
www.theleyswi.moonfruit.com

CLOCKHOUSE Community Centre

Long Ground, Greater Leys OX4 7FX.
☎ 01865 395908 E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com

Over 50s advice
FREE monthly, confidential, advice on benefits, debt, housing and consumer issues. Outreach session at the Clockhouse, by Agnes Smith Advice Centre. Next date: Mon 30 April, 10–12pm.
For appointment call 395908.

Games Club for over 50s
Do you enjoy board games like scrabble and dominoes? Try this friendly club at the Clockhouse. £1. Drink/biscuits included. Now relaunching as an AFTERNOON club! Mondays 16, 23 and 30 April, 2– 3.30pm. All welcome.

Line dancing for over 50s
Monthly dances. No partner needed, beginners welcome. No line dance in April. Next one 14 May, 1.30pm, at the Clockhouse. £2

Yoga for over 50s
Seated/standing exercise, and relaxation. Improve your flexibility, feel calm and refreshed. Tuesdays 10–11am. £2.
(*No sessions: 3 and 10 April.*)

Singing for Fun for over 50s
Relax and enjoy singing in good company. Think you can't sing? We bet you can! Tues 1.30–3.30pm. FREE.
(*No sessions: 3 and 10 April.*)

Crafts Group for over 50s
Wednesdays, 11 am–2.30pm. Bring your knitting, crochet, or sewing and have a natter. Beginners very welcome.
£1 (*drink/biscuits included*).

Tai chi for over 50s
Seated and standing exercise to help you get more supple, and boost your energy.
Come and give it a try!
Thursdays 10–11am. £2
(*No sessions: 5 and 12 April.*)

Gardening Club.
Monthly meeting of SLIGO (*Senior Leys Independent Gardening Organisation*).
At 2pm, first Thursday of each month. 5 April: talk by Sue Bedwell from Bletchington on the National Gardens Scheme.
£2 per meeting. Adults of ALL ages very welcome.

SLIGO day coach trip to Warwick Town
Tuesday 24 April
Includes a guided walking tour of the Victorian Hill Close Gardens.
Coach departs at 9am from the Clockhouse (with *pick-ups at Blackbird Leys and Cowley Shopping Centre*).
Non-members welcome.
£12. BOOKING ESSENTIAL (*inc £5 deposit*)
☎ 01865 771613

Computer courses for over 50s
Learn at your own pace with the Clockhouse IT Project Group. Complete beginners very welcome. Learn how to improve your digital photography skills, or how to make DVDs and calendars.
£1 per session.
☎ 01865 395908

Evening activities group
Local people have started a "Clockhouse Activity Nights Group" (CLANG). Meet others, relax, chat, and make new friends. Adults of all ages welcome!
- ***Wednesday 25 April:*** *Evening Social, 7–9pm.*

£2 (*includes refreshments*).
For more details call 395908

Our sessions are either low-cost or free, and all Leys over 50s are very welcome! Contact Sally Meachim on 01865 395908 for dates and details.

LOCAL CHURCHES

The Church of the Holy Family
☎ *Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163*

Eucharist: Every Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective evening worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30–7.30pm. For hall bookings, wedding arrangements and enquiries.
Fellowship for Bible: Study, discussion and prayer. Most Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

Redeem Christian Church of God
☎ 07825 679044 and 01865 766056

Meets at the Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Service: 3.00–6.00pm
Bible study on Fridays: 7.00–8.00pm, except the last Friday of the month.
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

Leys Community Church
☎ Chipper and Hannah Betts, 07985 982804

Meets on Sundays, 3.30pm at the Church of the Holy Family. Meetings include special activities for children and young people.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys
☎ Church office, 01865 776903

Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6.00pm.

Chrisco Ministries
Pastor Gitaua & Evangelist Mary Gitaua
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677
Meets at Blackbird Leys Community Centre (Jack Agent Hall)
Sunday Service: 11am-2pm

S & R CHILDS
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL SERVICES

Pharmacy House, 69 London Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 9AA **Tel: (01865) 427272**

10 The Parade, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1EE **Tel: (01865) 378888**

142 Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2DZ **Tel: (01865) 714007**

4 Elms Parade, Botley, Oxford OX2 9LG **Tel: (01865) 245464**

www.srchilds.co.uk

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Leys Sport

Leys News aims to bring you the best in local sporting action. If you would like to sponsor this page please email editor@leysnews.co.uk or ring 01865 711756

STUDENTS PRAISED FOR LEADERSHIP SKILLS

OVER 40 primary school children were given the opportunity to try out a range of different sports in support of the national QuadKids festival initiative at The Oxford Academy.

Led by Academy PE teacher, Nathan Broadhurst, Year 5 and 6 children from two of the Academy's partner schools, Rosehill Primary and local special school, Mabel Prichard, got the chance to test out their jumping, running and throwing skills while being carefully monitored by Year 8 and Sixth Form Academy students.

Academy Year 8 student Lewis Wild said:"This event is good because it's helping young kids get into sport and they have the chance to use the facilities at a special place like this."

A spokesman said: "The huge success of this event paves the way for future athletics events here at the Academy, not least our bonanza summer QuadKids festival involving all of the Academy's partner primary schools."

QuadKids is a nationally proven athletics concept endorsed by England Athletics and designed to give more children the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of athletics and to identify the stars of tomorrow.

It includes the four core disciplines of running, throwing, jumping and sprinting - hence 'Quad' and is a simple, effective and inclusive way of getting more children to participate in physical activity.

KICK OFF FOR NEW FOOTY LEAGUE

A NEW eight-a-side football league launches in Oxford in April to give players the chance to develop competitive football skills, enjoy the beautiful game and raise money for charity.

The male league and a female league are based at the fantastic Olympic water-based AstroTurf pitch at the Iffley Road Sports Centre, Oxford. The League will play every Wednesday from 6–7pm and individuals and teams are invited to take part.

All profits go to Jacari, a charity which supports children who don't speak English as their first language. Oxford has large numbers of children who struggle to learn, speak and understand English, hindering their integration into school and society. Jacari helps to solve this by matching up these children with students from universities in Oxford who visit their home once a week to teach English.

The next league start date is Wednesday 4 April and it finishes after ten weeks on Wednesday 6 June.

The cost is £5 per player per week. Participants get to play 20 matches over the ten weeks at a total cost of £50 each.

For more info or to register contact www.oxfordfootballleague.co.uk

The Leys neighbourhood partnership

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

The Leys Neighbourhood Partnership

We would like your opinion on a logo for the Leys Neighbourhood Partnership.

Below is a choice of two logos. Please tick which one you prefer and return this slip to The Leys Linx Centre, The Leys Library or The Leys News Office by Tuesday 1 May.

leys neigbourhood partnership

☐ Please tick if you prefer this logo

Leys neigbourhood partnership

☐ Please tick if you prefer this logo

The Leys Neighbourhood Partnership has been working with the local community to provide and promote opportunities to residents.

The partnership has been working with CDI (*Community Development Initiative*) to apply for Community First Funding which could potentially bring the area £33,000 in funding.

This funding would be over a four year period and would be available for community groups, associations and services to apply for.

The money would be allocated to applications which directly benefit the local community. More information on how to apply for this funding will be advertised soon.

The partnership is also working closely with Oxford City Council's City Development team to deal with local parking problems.

It is also working with Blackbird Leys Community Association to provide more opportunities for residents to gain access to employment and training.

The partnership is also working on an 'Our Place' photography project which will encourage local groups to get involved in photographing areas they like and dislike in the Leys. The aim of the project is to work with organisations to improve these locations.

Oxford City Council's Neighbourhood Locality Officers and Community Development Worker will be working on this project during April and June. They would like to hear from groups who are interested in taking part in this project. You can contact them on 01865 252646 or email communities@oxford.gov.uk

The photos will be collated into a book and an exhibition of the work will be displayed at The Leys Linx Centre during July and August.

It is important that you get involved so that you can let us know what changes you would like to see in the area.

The partnership, who first met in November 2011, aims to engage residents to find out what issues affect their day to day lives.

The Leys Partnership is also working on a logo and they would like to get your thoughts on the images in the box left. Please tick which logo you prefer and return it to The Leys Linx Office, The Leys News Office or the Blackbird Leys Library.